

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/22/93119

Site Address: MOBILE HOME AT COST A LOT STABLES, BLIND LANE, WEST END, SOUTHAMPTON, SO30 2HJ

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Relocation of existing mobile home, replacement of existing dayroom and siting of additional mobile home

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Outside the urban edge - Adjacent to Settlement Gap - Established Gypsy site		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
F/21/90757	Replacement of existing mobile home with the erection of a three-bedroom detached dwelling.	Withdrawn Jul 2021
X/15/76255	Relief of condition 4 of planning approval X/13/72016 to allow mobile home to remain in its current position.	Approved Feb 2018
X/13/72016	Relief of condition 1 of planning permission F/11/68768 (retention of mobile home for use by 1No. Gypsy family and associated structures comprising of an annexe and sheds) to allow the use to be permanent.	Approved Feb 2014
F/11/68768	Retention of mobile home for use by 1No. Gypsy family and associated structures comprising of an annexe and shed for a temporary period of 3 years.	Refused Jul 2011 (Allowed at Appeal Feb 2012)
F/11/68767	Retention of barn.	Refused Jul 2011 (Allowed at Appeal Feb 2012)
F/10/67523	Retrospective: temporary siting of a mobile home for 3 years to house a gypsy family.	Refused Nov 2010

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None received.		
Fair Oak Parish Council:	No objection.		
West End Parish Council:	No objection.		
Landscape:	Objection on ground of visual intrusion upon adjacent settlement gap and wider countryside. However, with further details on existing landscaping and boundary planting, this impact may be mitigated.		
Ecology:	Holding objection pending ecological appraisal and drainage details.		
Trees:	No objection subject to submission of tree protection details prior to commencement.		
Highways:	No objection.		
Planning Policy:	No objection in principle, provided criteria of DM31 are met.		
Natural England:	Objection on grounds of recreational impact upon New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar.		

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 24/08/2022		

Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan:

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1, S2 and S5; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM6, DM11, DM14 & DM31.

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Biodiversity

Assessment:

Site and Surrounding Context:

The application site is within designated countryside and is surrounded by agricultural fields and paddocks to the east, south and west. To the north of the site are a number of residential properties at the southern end of Horton Heath. This gives the area a very rural/semi-rural feel.

Not far to the south-east of the site is Denham's Corner a busy roundabout where Botley Road, Winchester Road, Bubb Lane and Snakemoor Lane meet.

The site is approximately 0.59 hectares in size in total, 0.41 hectares of which is used for horse grazing with the remainder being mainly concrete hard standing or chippings and used for more domestic purposes. The northern half of the application site where the existing mobile home and most of the other structures are located is relatively flat and level, with the remainder of the site sloping down in a generally south-easterly direction. The majority of the site boundaries are marked by timber post and rail fencing or close board fencing with a 3-4 metre high hedge behind these. There are also a number of trees within this hedge but nothing of any significant size, except for one near the southern end of the site and some along the northern boundary with the neighbouring property.

Proposals:

The application seeks consent for: the relocation of the existing mobile home slightly further to the west, almost in line with the eastern elevation of the barn to the south; the siting of an additional mobile home along the northern boundary of the site; and the replacement of the existing detached timber dayroom with a larger masonry built single storey dayroom building, which would be split in two, each half serving one of the mobile homes. The additional accommodation is sought to provide a caravan for the applicant's eldest daughter, who in Gypsy tradition is expected to move into her own caravan once she turns 18 years of age.

Policy & Principle:

The application site lies outside the urban edge where the principle of development, unless for specified purposes set out in Policy S5, is not usually considered acceptable. However, there are some exceptions to this, including development of existing dwellings in the countryside, provided they meet the criteria of the relevant local plan policies. The most relevant policy in this instance is DM31 which relates specifically to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This states that development of such sites will be accepted provided the following criteria are met:

- a. there is an identified need for the pitch or plot provision which the proposal helps to meet;

- b. the site is able to accommodate both residential use and where necessary the range of economic activities and vehicles associated with residents' mobile lifestyles without unacceptable impact on local amenities, road safety, heritage, landscape or biodiversity interests;
- c. the site has safe and convenient access to existing and proposed services and facilities to serve the residents, including education, health facilities and shops;
- d. the site has or can be viably provided with utility services; and
- e. the site has vehicular access to and from the strategic road network adequate to accommodate mobile residential units and any vehicles/machinery associated with residents' working activities.

With regards to each of the criteria, the applicant is recognised as being of Gypsy status, which in turn would also be the case for his daughter. As such, there is an identified need meeting the requirements of the first criteria. As to the remaining criteria, the site is already established as an acknowledged Gypsy site and meets the residential and economic needs of the applicant and his family. It is also of a sufficient size to be able to accommodate the further pitch sought. It also has good access to the highway and is near to local facilities, which will be expanding with the construction of the One Horton Heath site to the west of the application site. The site is also already served by utilities.

All requirements in terms of Policy DM31 are met, meaning that the principle of that proposed is acceptable, with any formal planning approval being dependent upon the impact of that proposed upon neighbouring uses and occupiers, as well as the character of the locality and how well the development accords with the other relevant policies of the local plan, in particular DM1.

Layout, Form, Scale, Design & Area Character:

The site is split into two main areas, an area of mainly hard standing along the northern side of the site and an area of rough paddock used for grazing horses to the south. As well as the existing mobile home there are a number of other structures on the site including a timber 'day room', a small stable block, a number of storage sheds, a small summerhouse and a metal barn to the south. Most of these structures sit on hard standing and the foundations of some now demolished buildings. The site is accessed via Blind Lane through a set of decorative gates on brick piers.

The proposed scheme would retain the general layout of the site, i.e. keeping all main structures towards the north-west corner of the site. The additional mobile home would be positioned along the northern edge of the site against a backdrop of mature trees and hedge. The new dayroom building, which has been amended to reduce its height from that originally submitted, whilst larger than the existing modest timber structure it is intended to replace, is nonetheless single storey in scale, thereby helping to limit its visual impact upon the locality. Materials have also been agreed with the applicant, which are secured via condition, meaning that suitable muted colours have been chosen to further limit its impact. It is also the case that much of the building, other than its roof would generally be screened by the existing boundary planting.

The concerns of the Council's Landscape Officer regarding the development's impact upon the adjacent settlement gap are noted. However, the existing boundary planting is actually quite dense and helps to limit the visibility of the site from any wide public vantage points. It is also intended to replicate a previously applied condition requiring all boundary landscaping to be kept at a height no lower than 4.0 metres high.

On balance, whilst the addition of further structures within the countryside is not something usually encouraged, in this instance, the proposed development will only result in one additional structure – the mobile home, albeit the replacement dayroom is larger in size. As such, it is not considered that there would be any adverse or unacceptable visual or physical impact upon the general visual amenity or character of the wider area.

Amenity:

In terms of amenity, that proposed should not result in any additional impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, due to the proximity and modest nature of that proposed. Equally, the existing site can easily provide the required level of internal and external amenity space necessary to meet the Council's standards in this regard.

Parking & Highways:

That proposed will not require the existing site access to be altered in any way and the site is sufficient in size to be able to accommodate any additional parking required to serve the additional pitch proposed.

Trees and Nature Conservation:

There are a number of trees around the edges of the site which form part of the boundary treatment and there is a single tree within the site adjacent to the mobile home. None are protected by any preservation orders. However, it is important that they are protected to ensure that the existing boundary screening is retained and undamaged.

In terms of nature conservation, whilst the holding objection from the Council's Ecologist is noted, the areas of the site where physical works will take place are already developed or form part the existing domestic garden space for the current mobile home. No other part of the site, in particular the boundary hedges should be impacted by that proposed. As such, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to require a full ecological appraisal to be undertaken.

The provision of an additional mobile home effectively results in a further dwelling, which would have an impact upon the Solent and New Forest SPAs in terms of water quality and recreational disturbance. However, this impact can be mitigated through various means, including a number of the Council's own schemes which the applicant intends to use. Mitigation towards recreational disturbance has been secured via an upfront payment, with nutrient mitigation secured via a pre-occupation condition. With this mitigation in place, it is considered that the development can be made acceptable in this regard.

Drainage:

It is expected that the proposed development would utilise the existing drainage system on site. Notwithstanding, a condition is recommended for details of drainage intended to serve the new structures be submitted and agreed prior to commencement. This can ensure that sustainable drainage methods are used.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3

of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Conclusion:

Recommendation:	PERMIT ☒	REFUSE ☐
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For the reasons set out above, the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out, which replicate or amend those previously applied to the site, including ensuring that the additional mobile home is used by a direct family member of the applicant.